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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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MARY ANN GRAY PLEADS GUILTY TO EMPLOYER THEFT

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that Mary Ann Gray, age 48, of Baltimore, Maryland, pled guilty before Chief United States Judge Benson E. Legg to one count of mail fraud arising from her theft of more than \$400,000 from her former employer, the Mid-Atlantic Venture Association, Inc., also known as MAVA.

According to the statement of facts introduced by the government at the plea proceeding, MAVA is a non-profit Maryland corporation located in Timonium, Maryland that promotes entrepreneur and venture capitalist relationships in the mid-Atlantic region. Gray was employed as MAVA's executive director from the early 1990's until January of 2002. Beginning in about December, 1996 Gray devised a scheme to defraud MAVA by issuing company checks totaling more than \$400,000 to pay for her personal expenses. Gray had signature authority for company checks up to \$1,000. For checks over \$1,000 she was to obtain a second signature from an authorized MAVA official. Gray used a signature stamp of the MAVA board president, without that official's knowledge or permission, to place a second signature on some of the checks. She also

represented to the company's accountant that checks were issued for legitimate company expenses when in fact the checks were used to pay various individuals, vendors and service providers for personal goods and services, such as: landscaping and interior decorating at Gray's residence, vacation rentals, home furniture, nanny services, and personal credit card charges for clothing and groceries.

The statement of facts further indicates that Gray previously had been employed as the Director of Development for the Johns Hopkins Children's Center from the late 1980's through October of 1991. While employed there, Gray allegedly used \$23,397.67 from the Johns Hopkins Children's Center telethon account to pay for personal expenses, including residential interior decorating.

Gray faces a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment followed by 3 years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross amount of loss caused by the offense. Sentencing is scheduled for November 14, 2003.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kathleen O. Gavin.